

add to trip planner

Fort Massachusetts - Gulf Islands National Seashore

TripAdvisor Traveler Rating

10 reviews

12 miles off the Mississippi Coast,
228-864-1014

VISIT WEBSITE

MORE PHOTOS

OVERVIEW



Fort Massachusetts is located on the western tip of Ship Island - 12 miles south of Gulfport and operated under the Gulf Islands National Seashore. Fort Massachusetts was one of the last Third System forts constructed. The importance of this location is the strategic deep water harbor located near the island. It was used by the British to stage their invasion of New Orleans in the War of 1812.

Construction of Fort Massachusetts did not begin until 1859, and by the beginning of the Civil War, little had been completed. It was occupied by a short time by the Confederates; however they later abandoned it to the Federals. The island was later used by the Federal troops to stage their invasion of New Orleans. Construction of the fort continued during the Civil War, with supplies brought in by ship from the North. Construction ended by 1866. The fort was never fully armed, and only manned by caretaker detachments from the end of the Civil War until its abandonment by the army around 1900.

Fort Massachusetts has a round face which oriented toward the deep-water harbor. Originally the fort was located 500 feet from the west end of Ship Island. It is now more than 1 mile from the west end of the island, and sand has been dredged and placed to protect the north side of the fort from erosion. Learn about this formidable structure, why built on an isolated island, and what was it protecting.

Rangers and volunteers give free guided tours of Fort Massachusetts during the spring, summer and fall. The tours begin inside the fort soon after the Ship Island ferry boat docks at the island. Tours are scheduled twice daily in the summer, and once daily in the spring and fall. Access to Ship Island is seasonal and by passenger ferry aboard **Ship Island Excursions**. A ferry departs from Gulfport Small Craft Harbor located at the intersection of Highway 49 and U.S. Highway 90 and Margaritaville Resort Biloxi. Admission charged for the ferry ride to Ship Island.

MAP



TRIPADVISOR



Ranked #293 of 756 things to do in Mississippi

TripAdvisor Traveler Rating

Based on 10 reviews

LATEST REVIEWS

“Interesting Coastal Fort”

OPMaster1978

Bowling Green, Kentucky

02/09/2020

Fort Massachusetts has a similar construction to other forts that were part of a coastal network built around the same time. While most of these structures have a similar build, each have a touch of...

[Read full review](#)

“History made”

Bob M

Fort Worth

07/13/2018

Ferry trip to Ship Island was okay but a little crowded. Once on the island there was plenty to do including swimming and sunbathing but the fort was what got my attention. The brick construction...

[Read full review](#)

“Cool Historical Fort”

FrUsa1991

The Woodlands, Texas

08/16/2017

Stopped in here on a recent sailing trip. This is a cool old confederate fort 12 miles off the coast. There are a few signs to help interpret your visit and the National Park Service offers a guided...

[Read full review](#)
